

# CATHOLIC PARISH OF ST MARY'S MACLEAN



ST JOHN'S CHURCH



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ST JAMES CHURCH

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## FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER, YEAR A: 3 MAY 2026

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ: the readings this fifth Sunday of Easter invite us to reflect on the fruits of the saving death and resurrection of Christ.

The first reading, Acts 6:1-7, affirms that the risen Lord realises his pastoral care for those in need through his disciples. The risen Christ, dwelling in his disciples, reproducing himself in them, acts in history through them. In this passage, seven disciples are chosen to look after the bodily needs of the Greek widows. Guided by the risen Christ and the Holy Spirit, the community of disciples deals with this practical issue. "The entire group of apostles addresses the problem. They distinguish between various ministries and they appoint members who will meet the needs brought before them. Furthermore, the community selects those who will exercise the ministry, and the apostles commission them" (Sr Dianne Bergant, CSA).

In addition, it is notable that the seven men had to be men of good reputation, filled with the Spirit and with wisdom. One of the men chosen, Stephen, is described a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit. In other words, Christian disciples can become living instruments of the pastoral care of risen Christ for the needy in the community if they have a living relationship with him, letting the light of His Word to guide them, and if they are habitually sensitive and obedient to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

The second reading, 1 Peter 2:4-9, teaches that by being united with the risen Christ, Christians become living stones with Christ. By coming to Christ, the living stone, Christians are built into a spiritual house, the Church, the community of disciples, the Body of Christ. They come to the risen Christ by faith active in hope and charity. Furthermore, united with Christ, Christians are "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation, a people set apart to sing the praises of God" and to offer "spiritual sacrifices, which Jesus Christ made acceptable to God." Here one finds the biblical teaching on the common priesthood of all the faithful. Essentially, the baptismal priesthood is being in communion of life and love with God,

whereby one is made holy, righteous, pleasing to God. This sanctification of the baptised in turn enables them to offer spiritual sacrifices, including a life enlightened by Christ and directed by the Holy Spirit, as well as, prayers, joys, sufferings, acts of mercy and so on.

In the gospel, John 14:1-12, Jesus speaks of his death as his going to his Father's house to prepare a place for his disciples in it, and his resurrection as his return to take them with him, "so that where I am, you may be, too." These words were spoken during the Last Supper. "Jesus seeks to strengthen his followers, who appear to be troubled at the thought of his departure. He does not conceal it, but he interprets it in a very positive way. He is indeed leaving, but he is going to the dwelling place of God and he promises to return to get them so that they can be together again" (Sr Dianna Bergant, CSA).

In other words, by his death and resurrection, Jesus has reopened for us sinners the space in God's life that was closed to us because of the Fall of Adam and Eve, and at the same time, reopened our humanity to God. Our souls were closed to the divine life after the fall. We can now live in God and God in us again thanks to the saving death and resurrection of Christ. "If his death is his departure and his resurrection is his return, then his union with his followers is the mutual indwelling enjoyed in this life by those united with him" (Sr Dianne Bergant, CSA). Jesus is not only "the way" to this communion of life, light and love with God, he is also that life, truth and love. This mutual indwelling began at Baptism, nourished by prayer, expressed and increased by good deeds, and restored by Reconciliation if lost by mortal sin, is made definitive in heaven.

The Eucharist, the real presence of the risen Christ in our midst, nourishes our communion with God and with one another. It is the spiritual sacrifice acceptable to God. In receiving it worthily, we live in Christ and Christ lives in us.

Fr Roland

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON** *(Iluka)*

O sing a new song to the Lord, for he has worked wonders; in the sight of the nations he has shown his deliverance, alleluia.

**COLLECT**

Almighty ever-living God, constantly accomplish the Paschal Mystery within us, that those you were pleased to make new in Holy Baptism may, under your protective care, bear much fruit and come to the joys of life eternal. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**FIRST READING**

*Acts of the Apostles 6:1-7*

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

About this time, when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenists made a complaint against the Hebrews: in the daily distribution their own widows were being overlooked. So the Twelve called a full meeting of the disciples and addressed them, 'It would not be right for us to neglect the word of God so as to give out food; you, brothers, must select from among yourselves seven men of good reputation, filled with the Spirit and with wisdom; we will hand over this duty to them, and continue to devote ourselves to prayer and to the service of the word.' The whole assembly approved of this proposal and elected Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, together with Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus of Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

The word of the Lord continued to spread: the number of disciples in Jerusalem was greatly increased, and a large group of priests made their submission to the faith.

The word of the Lord.

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM** *Ps 32:1-2. 4-5. 18-19. R. v.22*

**(R.) Lord, let your mercy be on us,  
as we place our trust in you.**

1. Ring out your joy to the Lord, O you just; for praise is fitting for loyal hearts. Give thanks to the Lord upon the harp, with a ten-stringed lute sing him songs. (R.)

2. For the word of the Lord is faithful and all his works to be trusted. The Lord loves justice and right and fills the earth with his love. (R.)

3. The Lord looks on those who revere him, on those who hope in his love, to rescue their souls from death,

to keep them alive in famine. (R.)

**SECOND READING**

*1 Peter 2:4-9*

A reading from the first letter of St Peter

The Lord is the living stone, rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him; set yourselves close to him so that you too, the holy priesthood that offers the spiritual sacrifices which Jesus Christ has made acceptable to God, may be living stones making a spiritual house. As scripture says: See how I lay in Zion a precious cornerstone that I have chosen and the man who rests his trust on it will not be disappointed. That means that for you who are believers, it is precious; but for unbelievers, the stone rejected by the builders has proved to be the keystone, a stone to stumble over, a rock to bring men down. They stumble over it because they do not believe in the word; it was the fate in store for them.

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation, a people set apart to sing the praises of God who called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.

The word of the Lord.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

*John 14:6*

**Alleluia, alleluia!**

***I am the way, the truth, and the life, says the Lord;  
no one comes to the Father, except through me.  
Alleluia!***

**GOSPEL**

*John 14:1-12*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

Jesus said to his disciples:

'Do not let your hearts be troubled.

Trust in God still, and trust in me.

There are many rooms in my Father's house; if there were not, I should have told you.

I am now going to prepare a place for you, and after I have gone and prepared you a place,

I shall return to take you with me;

so that where I am

you may be too.

You know the way to the place where I am going.'

Thomas said, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going, so how can we know the way?' Jesus said:

'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.

No one can come to the Father except through me.

If you know me, you know my Father too.

From this moment you know him and have seen him.'

Philip said, 'Lord, let us see the Father and then we shall be satisfied.' 'Have I been with you all this time, Philip,' said Jesus to him 'and you still do not know me?'

Philip,' said Jesus to him 'and you still do not know me?

'To have seen me is to have seen the Father, so how can you say, "Let us see the Father"?'  
Do you not believe  
that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?  
The words I say to you I do not speak as from myself:  
it is the Father, living in me, who is doing this work.  
You must believe me when I say  
that I am in the Father and the Father is in me;  
believe it on the evidence of this work, if for no other reason.  
'I tell you most solemnly,  
whoever believes in me  
will perform the same works as I do myself,  
he will perform even greater works,  
because I am going to the Father.'  
The Gospel of the Lord.

### **PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

O God, who by the wonderful exchange effected in this sacrifice have made us partakers of the one supreme Godhead, grant, we pray, that, as we have come to know your truth, we may make it ours by a worthy way of life. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **PREFACE; EUCHARISTIC PRAYER III**

#### **COMMUNION ANTIPHON (*Iluka*)**

I am the true vine and you are the branches, says the Lord. Whoever remains in me, and I in him, bears fruit in plenty, alleluia.

#### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Graciously be present to your people, we pray, O Lord, and lead those you have imbued with heavenly mysteries to pass from former ways to newness of life. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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#### **SCRIPTURE COMMENTARY**

Taken from the long discourse given by Jesus at the Last Supper, the Gospel, John 14:1-10, reflects upon this time and the understanding it will require from the disciples, that is, from the Church. In fact, there are two 'departures' of Jesus in view. The actual setting of the supper on the night before Jesus is to die makes it natural to understand the 'going away' of which he speaks as a reference to this imminent departure in death; his 'return', then, would refer to his reappearance, on the third day, as risen Lord. While at one level this is true, the discourse really addresses the more permanent 'going away' of Jesus when he finally returns to the Father following his appearances to the disciples as risen Lord. His 'return' would then be his return at the end of

time, a thought otherwise rare in the Fourth Gospel.

On this second level, what Jesus is really addressing in the discourse is not the period between Good Friday and Easter Sunday but the 'time of Church' that will follow – and will in fact extend indefinitely. This will be a time when the disciples will not have the reassurance of his physical presence and will feel that loss keenly ('Do not let your hearts be troubled. ...') What Jesus wants to insist upon here, however, is that it will be a 'graced' time, in fact a 'better' time. His departure to the Father will not mean loss but enrichment.

This gives the clue to understanding rightly Jesus' statement about there being 'many rooms' in his Father's house and about his going there to prepare a place for the disciples. In a way that has long provided comfort for many people, the statement, at face value, conveys the impression of heaven as a kind of vast motel to which Jesus is going in order to prepare 'rooms' for the faithful after they die. This does not, however, do full justice to the way the Johannine gospel confronts the problem of death and, in particular, to the richness which the gospel draws out of the motif of divine 'remaining'/'dwelling'.

John's Gospel presents the entire work of Jesus Christ as nothing less than a fulfilment of a divine project to bring about mutual 'at-homeness' between God and human beings. As heralded in the Prologue, the Word, whose proper dwelling is in eternity 'with God' (1:1-2), has 'become flesh' (1:14). In the human person of Jesus Christ, God has made a dwelling-place – literally, 'has pitched his tent' – among us. The disciples 'have seen his glory' in the sense that the words and actions of Jesus, notably his 'signs' (miracles), have rendered ordinary human life transparent to God's presence and to the gift of 'eternal life' which, through Jesus, God wishes to impart. To 'have eternal life' in this sense is nothing less than to have a share in God's own life, to become 'children of God' (1:12; 11:52), inhabitants of God's 'house' forever. As Jesus explains to Martha, grieving at the death of her brother Lazarus, this is the true response and remedy to human mortality: 'I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even though they die, will live; and whoever lives believing in me, will never die' (John 11:25-26).

What Jesus is attempting to explain to the puzzled disciples in today's Gospel is that this gift of eternal life, and the divine 'at-homeness' that goes with it, can only come about through his 'going away' for a time. His suffering and death are necessary to defeat the grip of sin and death upon the human race and open up the way to life.

The many 'rooms' or 'dwelling places' which he is going away to prepare are in fact the separate instances of God's 'indwelling' in the heart of each and every believer. As he will say later, 'Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them' (14:23). The disciples, as Philip so plaintively points out, cannot 'see' the Father. But, Jesus explains, he himself is 'the Way' to the revelation of the Father (the 'Truth'), in which is contained the gift of '(eternal) life' ('the Life'). In relating to him (Jesus), they are becoming 'at home' with God and God with them.

*Fr Brendan Byrne, SJ*

## ONLINE GIVING

Internet donations to assist our parish are always welcome. Details for donating online via Electronic Funds Transfer BSB: 032582 Account Number: 810033 [Surname, parish envelope no]

## PRAYER REQUESTS

**Prayers for the Sick:** Audrey Hancock, Ben & Nadine Shaw, Patrick Wheeler, Denise & Bob, Tim Scherger, Jan Taylor, Miriam Scherger, Kathy Leseberg, Ava Blay, Mark Thurbon, Alma Bailey, Mary Wiseman, Sue Gravolin, Ron Weekes, Pam Lewis, Matthew & Paul Gallagher, Chris Naismith, Trevor Nicolai, Peter Burns, Matthew Tierney, Sharon Grayson, Dennis Catheral, Allan Dick. **Recently Deceased:** Margaret Donges, Maree Hammond, Mary Thorne, Dennis Neville. **Anniversary:** Jack Turk, Stan Fornal, Mark Leseberg, William Ellem, Douglas Henry Starr Snr. **Pray for:** Jurgen Zoller, John Fox, Towell, Baker, Gough & Robertson families, Fran Eckersley, Robyn Smith, Pam Sutherland All the suffering souls in Purgatory especially the dec'd members of F.O.S.S.

## MASS TIMES:

**Sunday Masses:** Yamba: 5:30pm (SAT); Maclean: 8:30am (SUN); Iluka: 10:30am (SUN).

**Weekday Masses:** Tuesday, 9:00am: Iluka; Wednesday, 9:30am: Yamba; Friday, 12:00am, Maclean; First Saturday: 11:30am, Maclean.

## RECONCILIATION TIMES

Saturday, 11:00am, Maclean; 5:00pm, Yamba  
Sunday, 8:00am, Maclean  
Tuesday, 9:30am, Iluka  
Wednesday, 10:00am, Yamba

## EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION:

First Wednesday: 10:00am, Yamba  
First Saturday: 12:00pm, Maclean

## MINISTRY ROSTER: 9/10 MAY 2026

**Readers:** Yamba: G Drummond/A Schofield;  
Maclean: R Wiseman/B McGowan; Iluka: T Sullivan.  
**Commentators:** Yamba: F Robertson; Maclean: J de Roos, Iluka: H Naug. **E Communion:** Maclean: J Moloney. **Count team:** Robertson/Neander.

## READINGS: 9/10 MAY 2026

**First:** Acts of the Apostles 8:5-8. 14-17; **Second:** 1 Peter 3:15-18; **Gospel:** John 14:15-21

## NEWS & EVENTS

**Emergency contact:** In case of emergency outside of parish office hours, contact Fr Roland 0401 508 812.

**New office days/times:** Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 9:00am-2:30pm.

**Parish bulletin online:** Our bulletin is now uploaded weekly to our website <http://stmarysparish.org.au>

**Confirmation 2026:** was held on Wednesday 29th April 2026 at St. Mary's church, Maclean.

Congratulations to the candidates of Confirmation: Lachlan, Rudy, Charlotte, Bronte, Letty, Lewis, James, Fletcher, Taura, James, Nick, Alfie, Jack, Leo, Ben, Will, Millie, Alexis, Callie, Karla, Indiannah, Harper, Zayden, Aleaha and Willow. We thank the parents, sponsors, teachers and all who supported them. May they continue to use the Gifts of the Holy Spirit that they may always choose to do the right thing and inspired to be always loving.

**Baptism:** Welcome to the Family of God Leki, Haze, Fletcher, Murphy and Keegan who are getting baptised in our parish this weekend.

**The 6th National Count of Attendance at Mass and Other (Sunday) Assemblies** will take place in May 2026. This year marks a significant milestone—25 years of national attendance data, beginning with the first count in 2001. The 2026 results will provide valuable insights into long-term trends, particularly in understanding the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which influenced attendance patterns in 2021.

**Vocations view:** Vocations view: Do you know a Catholic man, aged between 18-35, whom God may be calling to the priesthood? Perhaps God is asking you to be the voice to prompt that man to consider the quiet whisper he already hears in his heart. Ask someone if they have considered the call. [vocations@lismore.catholic.org.au](mailto:vocations@lismore.catholic.org.au)

**Passionist Family Group Movement:** Please see the latest copy of the newsletter on the noticeboard.

**Thinking of Becoming a Catholic?** Contact Fr Roland 0401508 812

**Preschool in St James School DA Application:** We are excited to announce that we are supporting St James Catholic Primary School to submit a Development Application (DA) for a proposed new on-site preschool. If approved, the preschool building would be funded by the NSW Government's New and Upgraded Pre-School Funding Program. The proposed preschool would provide a high-quality early years education program for local children and in time support potentially a smooth and connected transition into Kindergarten at St James in line with diocesan policy.

**Yamba Catholic Ladies General Meeting** is taking place on Wednesday 13 May after mass, approximately 10:15am in the Ted Howe Room. The meeting is open to EVERYONE in our Parish Community. We welcome anyone to come along and give us ideas and offers to help. Please come and join us to see what you can do to help our Parish.

**Eucharist Adoration after Mass** will be held on Wednesday 6 May and will conclude with benediction.